

## **Gender Role Attitudes and Occupational Aspirations of Pakistani Adolescents**

**Saadia Aziz**

**&**

**Anila Kamal**

National Institute of Psychology *Centre of Excellence*  
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

Present study was an exploratory study and an attempt to investigate gender role attitudes and occupational aspirations of Pakistani adolescents. Two hundred (100 males and 100 females) adolescents studying at undergraduate level participated in the study by filling out the Occupational Aspirations Scale (Aziz & Kamal, 2009) and Sex Role Attitude Scale (Anila & Ansari, 1992). Findings revealed significant difference in occupational aspirations of males and females as men aspired more for traditional men occupations and women aspired more for traditional women occupations than traditional men occupations. Moreover, girls were found to have more modern/egalitarian gender role attitudes than boys but this change may only appear in their attitudes, not in their real aspirations. Mean scores and ranking of boys' occupational aspirations showed their high aspirations for engineering, armed forces, and pilots whereas, girls aspired more for occupations of medicine, lecturer ship, and psychologist.

*Key Words:* Occupational aspirations, Gender role attitudes, Traditional men and traditional women occupations

Gender roles reflect the traditional, prevailing cultural norms in a given place during a specific era. However, these norms are not universal and may not be necessarily healthy. They are individually constructed and differ according to the context and are related to individual experiences (Fields & Cochran, 2010). Customs governing appropriate relations and cultural variations in gender roles of men and women indicate a social foundation for most of the differences (Williams & Best, 1990). This is substantial empirical evidence suggesting that cultural and historical contexts shape adolescents' construction of self, gender appropriate behavior and continue to change (Clemans, DeRose, Graber & Brooks-Gun, 2010; Hassan, 1996). A child's first exposure to what it means to be male or female is internalized through parents (Lauer & Lauer, 1994; Santrock, 1994). From the very beginning parents treat sons and daughters differently by dressing them in different colors according to their gender, giving gender-specific toys, and expecting different behavior from boys and girls (Thorne, 1993). Parents express gender-related attitudes to their children throughout the childhood that plays its part in gender-role development. Children of parents who follow egalitarian divisions of labor were more likely to envisage occupational roles that were less constrained by gender stereotypes whereas children of those parents who chose traditional divisions of labor pursue stereotypic occupations for themselves, such as boys visualize themselves in male stereotyped occupations and girls foresee themselves in female occupations. Few gender differences were observed in occupational choices among children of egalitarian parents

(Fulcher, Sutfin, & Patterson, 2008; Tenenbaum & Leaper 2002).

The development of occupational aspirations is the focus of Gottfredson's (1981) theory that illustrates how people become attracted to certain occupations. While focusing on the acceptable occupations individuals follow four general criteria; (i) a biologically based criterion, gender; (ii) a social criterion, status; (iii) criterion which draws on the reality principal, accessibility of training and jobs a (iv) and a psychological criterion, field of interest. Theory offers a developmental, sociological viewpoint on career development that describes the types of compromises people make while shaping their occupational aspirations. The initial decisions about an occupation are made during childhood or adolescence and tend to be more focused and mature with the passage of time (Lee & Rojewski, 2009; Helwig, 2008). Occupational aspiration is considered to be the occupation named as one's best alternative at any given time (Gottfredson, 1996). Care, Deans, and Brown (2007) and Esther, Jan, and Robert (2007) investigated the young children's career development in the context of Gottfredson's stage theory of occupational aspirations. It was observed that children displayed sex typing of their aspirations, and majority of the children nominated real occupational roles as aspirations for adult life rather than fantasized ones.

Aisenbrey and Brückner (2008) found that women were less likely than men to realize their occupational aspirations and their occupational choices were deeply guarded by a gendered system of vocational professional training. Yet the allocation of women and men into different occupations was not the primary factor in the gender wage gap. Miller and Budd (1999) observed significant differences between male and female students of different age groups for many

---

Correspondence Concerning this article should be addressed to Saadia Aziz, PhD Scholar, National Institute of Clinical Psychology, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, at Email: [Azizsadi@gmail.com](mailto:Azizsadi@gmail.com) / azizsadi@Yahoo.com

occupations, with higher ratings assigned to stereo-typically gender-appropriate careers and between the three age groups (Halena, 1997; Sandra, 1998). Patton and Creed (2007) noted that Australian adolescent students generally held higher occupational aspirations than expectations, and male students were more likely to choose professional occupations than were female students. In spite of substantial liberalization in sex-role stereotypes adolescent girls' still tend to concentrate on jobs that have historically been occupied by women. They are more inclined to those jobs that involve working with people and give the liberty of expression and altruism and are more responsive communicative partners than boys. Limited number of girls intends to opt for those careers where they have to work with things, rather than people such as science or engineering. Additionally girls are more likely to endorse feminine, expressive traits, and are cooperative activity oriented than boys. Their concern about work-family balance is greater than boys that further inhibit their occupational decision making (Mehta & Strough, 2010; Steinberg, 2005). Findings of Meng-Jung and Chin Chung (2010) also confirmed the gender differences in usage of internet for significantly different purposes for boys and girls as boys had more exploration-orientation and the girls had communication-orientation. Morinaga, Hanson, and Ferligoj (1993) observed that women from United States, Japan, and Slovenia were less traditional in gender role attitudes than men whereas Japanese women had the most traditional gender role attitudes. Women with less traditional gender role attitudes were more career oriented (Gianakos, 1995).

Research on women career development had identified both internal and external barriers associated with women career development that make the process of career decision-making and maintaining a career more complex and restricted for women than from men such as personality, gender role socialization, financial resources and salience of various life roles (Sandra, 1998; Satre & Mullet, 1992). Mei, Wei, and Mark D (2008) found that career self-efficacy act as a mediator in process of career decision-making but paths predicting career aspirations were found to be different for female and male high school students. Women tend to value parental role more over the occupational role whereas men preferred the occupational role in contrast to the marital role (Anyadike-Danes & McVicar, 2010; Moya, Exposito, & Ruiz, 2000; Sanders, 2004). Most of the young people give priority to occupation which is compatible to their gender and social class when contemplating career choice (Gottfredson, 1996; Rojewski, 2005; Schoon & Parsons, 2002). Considerable evidence suggests that female adolescents aspire within a limited range of occupational choices such as administrative clerks, teachers, nurses, sales clerks (Meinster & Rose, 2001) and are underrepresented in many high-status occupational fields and a gender gap in their expectations regarding pay also exists (Mary & Lee, 2010). Fortin (2005) indicated that anti-egalitarian views and 'mother's guilt'—the unavoidable clash between family values and egalitarian views, that acts as an inner conflict for many women is also an impediment towards greater gender equality in the labor market. There

are number of factors that hamper females in making choice of occupation they aspire such as education, experience, work motivation, parental involvement, socioeconomic status, family responsibilities, family disapproval, tangible family support, inability to manage home and job simultaneously, narrow range of available alternatives due to the lack of industrial diversification in Pakistan which is indispensable in providing opportunities to females (Anni & Diane, 2007; Briana & Susan, 2008; Furdose, 2003; Ju-Chun, 2010; Nasir, 2005). Employers lack of interest to employ female labor at the cost of male labor due to lower wage rate, and discriminatory practices are so deeply rooted in patriarchal societies and offers very few opportunities to females to enter in the labor market and opt for high paid occupations (Nasir, 2005; Teo, 2003; Zveglic & Rodgers, 2004).

In Pakistan compound legal system that comprises of Islamic law, Secular law and customary norms govern the life of people, which creates incongruence and duality in public and private life (Shaheed & Warraich, 1998). Haque (2010) pointed that though culture plays a significant role in determining gender roles, but Islamization also reinforces traditional culture. Emphasizing traditional roles for women further strengthen the cultural norms that set the perimeters for female mobility and widen the gap in labor force (Jalal, 1991). Read (2003) also found religiosity and ethnicity as important factors in shaping women's gender role attitudes than are their affiliations as Muslims and Christians. The notion of differential socialization of the sexes towards aspiring for and accepting confined occupational roles for men and women have restricted both genders to limit their aspirations and wrongly perceive their capabilities. Adolescents need to be insinuated to the differences between what is desired and what is realistic in the context of learning about the world of work and themselves. As previously been highlighted, in Pakistan being a developing country there is paucity of research evidence on the issue related to occupational aspirations of adolescents. Very few studies had been conducted on the subject and the facts and figures provided by the Federal Bureau of Statistics (2010) speaks itself and confirm the occupational segregation and profusion of females in low paid occupations (Nazli, 2004; Siddiqui & Hamid, 2003). Male participation ratio (49.3) in comparison to female participation ratio (14.0) shows a large gap. Employment status and sex ratio in 2007-2008 shows that 65% of the females work as unpaid family helpers where as 22.2% females and 39.5% of males are employed in formal sector. The distribution of employed in major occupational groups highlights a major gap in male (15.5%) and female (1.8%) participation (FBS, 2010). In the Pakistani society females are supposed to play the role of secondary earners so they are persuaded to opt for those occupations which are least preferred by males (Siddiqui & Hamid, 2003).

Present study is exploratory in its nature as it investigated the gender role attitudes and occupational aspirations of Pakistani adolescents. Stockard (as cited in Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & El-Gibaly, 2003) indicated that despite growing interest

## GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

in adolescents' lives in developing countries little attention has been paid to gender-role attitudes among young people in comparison to developed countries where a large empirical research and literature exists focusing on the development of gender identity and the acquisition of gender roles in childhood, and there is real dearth of research in developing countries. Keeping in view the significance of the issue, study focused on the gender difference in occupational aspirations and gender role attitudes of adolescents. Moreover the ranking of occupations by males and females in terms of one's best alternative at a given point was also explored. Based on previous literature and research review emphasizing the importance of gender role attitudes and occupational aspirations in further career pursuits, following hypotheses were formulated:

### Hypothesis

1. Girls aspire more for traditional women occupations than traditional men occupations whereas boys aspire more for traditional men occupations than traditional women occupations.
2. Girls hold more traditional gender role attitudes as compared to boys.

### Method

#### Sample

A sample of 200 students including boys ( $n = 100$ ) and girls ( $n = 100$ ), age range of 16 to 18 with mean age of 17.5 years, who were willing to participate in the study were requested to fill in the questionnaires along some demographic information and informed consent form. They were contacted in different colleges of Islamabad and Rawalpindi (e.g., Government Postgraduate College for Women, Satellite Town; Islamabad Model College for Girls F/6-2; Islamabad College for Girls F/6-2; Govt. Postgraduate College for Women, F/7-2; Govt. Asghar Mall College for Men; Islamabad College for Boys; 502 Model College for Boys; Islamabad model College for Boys F/7-3). Participants were briefed about the nature and purpose of the study and after getting their consent to participate they were asked to fill in the questionnaires. The sample comprised of those undergraduate students studying in humanities/arts group ( $n = 100$ , 50 boys & 50 girls), and science/general group ( $n = 100$ , 50 boys & 50 girls). The sample belonged to different socioeconomic status.

#### Instruments

**Occupational Aspirations Scale (OAS)** developed by Aziz and Kamal (2009) is based on Gottfredson's theory of occupational aspirations (1981) which deals with four dimensions: prestige level for men and for women, general desirability, traditionality of occupations, and general knowledge and familiarity about occupations. As a preliminary step for development of OAS, common occupations in Pakistan were

identified on the basis of two sources: (i) a study carried out by Ansari (1981) and (ii) Compendium on Gender Statistics (FBS, 1998). On the basis of these sources 20 occupations were derived from Ansari's study (1981) and 10 were on basis of Compendium on Gender Statistics (FBS, 1998). An "occupational identification sheet" comprising list of 30 occupations was given to the raters with a request to write down the names of those occupations that are not listed here and those which are quite common in Pakistan. The underlying reason behind this exercise was that later on when adolescents respond on the scale they must have some familiarity about the occupation and knowing what are the certain roles and responsibilities associated with each occupation. OAS passed through five phases during its development process and at each phase independent sample of adolescents and adults was used. Keeping in view the target population (i.e., educated adolescents) and objective of the study, educated sample of raters who were willing to participate in the study were approached. Over all 90 raters participated in different phases of the development of scale (see Aziz & Kamal, 2009).

Occupational Aspirations Scale is a measure of participant aspiration for certain occupation. Participants rate their level of aspiration to opt for each occupation. OAS comprises of 39 common occupations in Pakistan. Among 39 occupations, 9 are traditional women (T.W) occupations, and 30 are traditional men (T.M) occupations. It is a 5-point scale and the range of total scores on all the occupations is 39 to 195 whereas the score range for traditional men occupations are 30 to 150 and for traditional women occupations it ranges from 9 to 45. The subject has to respond by indicating the degree of aspiration for all the occupations. Alpha Reliability Coefficients for traditional women and traditional men occupations on Occupational Aspirations Scale (OAS) consisting common occupations in Pakistan is found to be satisfactory which is .78 for traditional women occupations and .73 for traditional men occupations (Aziz & Kamal, 2009).

**Sex Role Attitude Scale (SRAS)** developed by Anila and Ansari (1992) was based on Sandra Bem's gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). It consists of 32 items that measure the attitudes of subjects towards different work roles assigned to men and women, their parental responsibilities; occupational abilities; marriage plan; vital life decisions; personal relationship; and level and type of academic achievement for men and women. It is a 5-point scale on which respondent has to indicate the degree of his agreement or disagreement. Half of the items are phrased traditionally and half are modern. The modern items are positively phrased, and the traditional items are negatively phrased. In scoring the traditional items are reversed so that the high total score is indicative of modern gender role attitudes. The score range of total SRAS is 32 to 160. The reliability of the scale was determined through alpha reliability coefficient which was found to be .78 (Anila, 1992), and .71 (Anila, Khan, & Sabir, 1993). SRAS is a widely researched upon scale and had been extensively used in

Pakistani context (e.g., Salik, 2003; Tahira, 2005; Yaqoob, 2007; Zahra, 2009) which indicate the validity of SRAS.

## Results

As present research was an exploratory study so gender-wise differences in gender role attitudes and occupational aspirations were explored by applying t-test on subscales of Occupational Aspirations Scale (OAS) and on Sex Role Attitude Scale (SRAS).

**Table 1:** Gender-wise Comparison on OAS

	Subscales	Gender				t
		Boys (n = 100)		Girls (n = 100)		
		M	SD	M	SD	
1.	Traditional Women	19.3	4.8	25.9	5.3	9.1*
2.	Traditional Men	71.4	13.6	64.1	12.0	4.2*

\* $p < .001$

The results in Table 1 show significant differences between boys and girls on traditional women and traditional men occupations. Girls had high aspirations for traditional women occupations, whereas boys aspired more for traditional men occupations. These findings confirmed hypothesis no. 1.

**Table 2**

*Gender-wise Comparison on SRAS*

SRAS	Gender				t
	Boys (n = 100)		Girls (n = 100)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
SRAS	99.4	11.7	108.8	11.6	5.67*

\* $p < .001$

The results shown in Table 2 indicate significant differences between boys and girls in their perceived gender role attitudes. The high mean score of girls on SRAS indicate that girls hold more modern or egalitarian gender role attitudes as compared to boys which was contrary to our assumption and disconfirmed hypothesis no. 2

**Table 3**

*Mean Score and Ranking of Boys Occupational Aspirations*

Occupations	Means (N=100)	Ranks	General <sup>1</sup> Desirability Ranks	Prestige <sup>2</sup> Ranks (M)	Prestige <sup>3</sup> Ranks (W)
1. Scientist (T.M)	3.17	3	1	3	7
2. Armed Forces (T.M)	3.32	2	2.5	2	27
3. Computer Personnel (T.M)	2.98	6	2.5	4.5	7
4. Engineer (T.M)	3.61	1	5	4.5	13
5. Pilot (T.M)	3.13	4	5	1	19
6. Civil/Foreign Service (T.M)	2.97	7	5	6.5	4.5
7. Lecturer (T.W)	2.68	11	8	8	1
8. Medicine (T.W)	2.40	16.5	8	13.5	2
9. Researcher (T.M)	2.03	25	8	6.5	13
10. Lawyer/Judge (T.M)	2.27	20	10.5	17.5	13
11. Teacher (T.W)	2.51	13	10.5	13.5	9
12. Banker (T.M)	2.40	16.5	12.5	17.5	16.5
13. Business (T.M)	3.11	5	12.5	10.5	25
14. Religious Scholar (T.M)	2.35	18	14	10.5	13
15. Manager (T.M)	2.16	22	15	21	19
16. Sports (T.M)	2.84	9.5	16	9	28

**GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS**

17.	Hotel Management (T.M)	2.06	24	17.5	21	21
18.	Psychologist (T.W)	2.84	9.5	17.5	23	4.5
19.	Accountant (T.M)	2.12	23	19	13.5	22.5
20.	Craft & Skill Worker (T.M)	2.88	8	20.5	27	19
21.	Chemist (T.M)	1.79	33	20.5	13.5	25
22.	Journalist (T.M)	2.29	19	22.5	17.5	16.5
23.	Dress Designer (T.W)	2.02	27.5	22.5	29	3
24.	Politician (T.M)	1.74	35	24	29	32
25.	Agriculture/Fishery Worker (T.M)	1.84	31	25	17.5	30
26.	Beautician (T.W)	1.55	36	27	39	7
27.	Contractor (T.M)	1.93	29	27	34.5	37
28.	Producer (T.V, Film) (T.M)	2.46	14	27	24.5	25
29.	Technician (T.M)	2.02	27.5	29.5	29	35.5
30.	Flight Attendant (T.W)	1.41	37.5	29.5	37	10
31.	Police (T.M)	2.02	27.5	32	26	33.5
32.	Photographer (T.M)	2.20	21	32	21	29
33.	Nurse (T.M)	1.20	39	32	38	13
34.	Sales Rep (T.M)	1.87	30	34.5	31.5	31
35.	Artist (T.W)	1.41	37.5	34.5	24.5	22.5
36.	Transporter (T.M)	2.44	15	36	31.5	38.5
37.	Electrician (T.M)	2.54	12	37	33	38.5
38.	Machine Operator (T.M)	1.80	32	38	34.5	33.5
39.	Clerk (T.M)	1.77	34	39	36	35.5

T.M & T.W: Traditional Men and Traditional Women

1: General Desirability: General desirability of occupation by both genders in order of rank

2 & 3: Prestige Ranking (M) & (W): Ranking of occupations according to their prestige for men (M) and women (W).

Gender-wise mean scores and ranking of occupational aspirations were also calculated. On the basis of mean scores ranks were assigned with Spearman's ranking procedure. Means scores and ranks assigned to occupational aspirations of boys show that most aspired occupations by boys were engineer, armed forces, scientist, pilot, and business (Table 3). Engineering was found as the most aspired occupation of boys that was assigned the rank of 5 on its general desirability and prestige for men. The second most aspired occupation was armed forces, which is considered as second most generally desirable and prestigious occupation for men. The third and fourth most aspired occupations are scientist and pilot. Occupation of scientist was ranked as the top most generally

desirable occupation and lies on rank 3 in its prestige for men whereas pilot is ranked as fifth most generally desirable occupation and considered as top most prestigious occupation for men. Occupation of businessman is found to be the fifth most aspired occupation that is considered as twelfth generally desirable occupation and lies on rank 10 in its prestige for men. Results of Table 4 revealed that boys aspired more for those occupations that are compatible with their gender and (i.e., traditional men occupations). Boys showed their least aspirations for occupations of nursing, artist, flight attendant, beautician, and clerk.

**Table 4**

*Mean Score and Ranking of Girls Occupational Aspirations*

Occupations	Means (N=100)	Ranks	General <sup>1</sup> Desirability Ranks	Prestige <sup>2</sup> Ranks (M)	Prestige <sup>3</sup> Ranks (W)
1. Scientist (T.M)	3.29	6	1	3	7
2. Armed Forces (T.M)	3.19	7	2.5	2	27
3. Computer-Personnel (T.M)	3.43	4	2.5	4.5	7
4. Engineer (T.M)	2.89	11	5	4.5	13
5. Pilot (T.M)	2.33	19	5	1	19

**Saadia Aziz & Anila Kamal**

6.	Civil/Foreign Service (T.M)	3.42	5	5	6.5	4.5
7.	Lecturer (T.W)	3.68	2	8	8	1
8.	Medicine (T.W)	3.79	1	8	13.5	2
9.	Researcher (T.M)	2.31	20	8	6.5	13
10.	Lawyer/Judge (T.M)	2.33	19	10.5	17.5	13
11.	Teacher (T.W)	2.52	14	10.5	13.5	9
12.	Banker (T.M)	1.90	24.5	12.5	17.5	16.5
13.	Business (T.M)	2.42	17	12.5	10.5	25
14.	Religious Scholar (T.M)	2.64	13	14	10.5	13
15.	Manager (T.M)	1.51	32	15	21	19
16.	Sports (T.M)	2.78	12	16	9	28
17.	Hotel Management (T.M)	1.71	27	17.5	21	21
18.	Psychologist (T.W)	3.50	3	17.5	23	4.5
19.	Accountant (T.M)	1.63	29	19	13.5	22.5
20.	Craft & Skill Worker (T.M)	3.05	10	20.5	27	19
21.	Chemist (T.M)	1.34	36	20.5	13.5	25
22.	Journalist (T.M)	2.08	22	22.5	17.5	16.5
23.	Dress Designer (T.W)	3.16	8	22.5	29	3
24.	Politician (T.M)	1.47	34	24	29	32
25.	Agriculture/Fishery Worker (T.M)	1.51	32	25	17.5	30
26.	Beautician (T.W)	2.50	15	27	39	7
27.	Contractor (T.M)	1.19	38	27	34.5	37
28.	Producer (TV, Film) (T.M)	2.18	18	27	24.5	25
29.	Technician (T.M)	3.11	9	29.5	29	35.5
30.	Flight Attendant (T.W)	2.18	21	29.5	37	10
31.	Police (T.M)	1.22	37	32	26	33.5
32.	Photographer (T.M)	1.54	30	32	21	29
33.	Nurse (T.M)	1.51	32	32	38	13
34.	Sales Rep (T.M)	1.90	24.5	34.5	31.5	31
35.	Artist (T.W)	1.16	39	34.5	24.5	22.5
36.	Transporter (T.M)	2.01	23	36	31.5	38.5
37.	Electrician (T.M)	1.85	26	37	33	38.5
38.	Machine Operator (T.M)	1.69	28	38	34.5	33.5
39.	Clerk (T.M)	1.44	35	39	36	35.5

T.M & T.W: Traditional Men and Traditional Women

1: General Desirability: General desirability of occupation by both genders in order of rank

2 & 3: Prestige Ranking (M) & (W): Ranking of occupations according to their prestige for men (M) and women (W).

Results of Table 4 show the mean scores and ranking of girl's occupational aspirations. Girls showed their most aspirations for occupations of medicine, lecturer, psychologist, computer personnel, and civil/foreign service. The top most aspired occupation by girls is of medicine that is considered as eighth generally desirable occupation and second most prestigious occupation for women. Computer personnel and civil/foreign service are fourth and fifth highly aspired occupations that lie on rank 4 and 5 on general desirability, and on 5 and 7 for their prestige for women. These findings show that though girls have their highest aspirations for traditional women occupations but they also aspired for occupations of computer personnel and civil/foreign service which are traditional men occupations whereas the least aspired occupations by girls are artist, contractor, police, chemist, and clerk.

### Discussion

The present research was aimed to explore the gender role attitudes and occupational aspirations of Pakistani adolescents. Due to low rate of literacy in Pakistan, a need exists to guide those adolescents who are pursuing their studies without having deep understanding of their interests, aptitudes, and necessary information about the realities of labor market. Significant gender differences in occupational aspirations for traditional men and women occupations indicated that girls had high aspirations for traditional women occupations as compared to traditional men occupations, whereas boys had high aspirations for traditional men occupations as compared to traditional women occupations. This show despite some wave of change in societal patterns, and work role orientation, both boys and girls aspire for those occupations that are compatible to their own gender. Previous

## GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

researches (Aisenbrey & Brückner, 2008; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Bonnet, 1994; Fassinger, 1990; Gianakos, 1995; Gottfredson, 1996; Meinster & Rose, 2001; Moya et al., 2000; Schhon & Parsons, 2002; Riaz, 1995; Rojweski, 2005) also proclaimed the observed significant influence of gender on occupational aspirations of both genders. Gender differences were also observed in perceived gender role attitudes (Table 2), which indicate that girls hold more modern/egalitarian gender role attitudes as compared to boys. Though this disconfirmed the hypothesis no. 2 but these findings are in accord to previously carried out studies (Gianakos, 1995; Niles, 1994; O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993; Valenzuela, 1993). Findings in this case are not in accord with previous (Hassan, 1996; Helena, 1997; Helwig, 1998) studies in which girls were found to possess traditional gender role attitude. This may be due to that previous studies carried out in west indicate something different regarding traditionality from Pakistani society in which moral obligations and reservations are given undue importance. The contradiction in assumption and results (Table 2) may also be attributed to other factors like impact of media, globalization, change in societal norms and values, increase in women literacy rate.

Mean scores and ranking of occupational aspirations of boys (Table 3) showed their high aspirations for occupations of engineer, armed forces, pilot, scientist, and business which are traditionally men occupations and are also high in prestige ranking for men and general desirability. Findings also revealed that boys had their low aspirations for traditional women occupations. Results of Patton and Creed (2007) also support the findings of present research in which gender differences were observed with males' being more likely to choose professional occupations and are less likely to choose semi professional occupations. These findings are also consistent with earlier studies (e.g., Aziz & Kamal, 2009; Aisenbrey and Brückner, 2008; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Bonnet, 1994; Fassinger, 1990). Girls mean scores and ranking of occupational aspirations (Table 4) showed their highest aspirations for occupations of medicine, lecturer, psychologist, computer personnel, and civil/foreign service. This indicates that girls aspire more for traditional women occupations whereas their aspirations for occupation of computer personnel and civil/foreign service show that there is a change in trend and girls are also pursuing for some traditional men occupations. Some previously carried out researches also confirm the findings (Fortin, 2005; Gianakos, 1995; Gottfredson, 1996; Helena, 1997; Mehta & Strough, 2010) in which difference among occupational aspirations of boys and girls have been observed.

### Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that the notable significant finding of the research is the significant differences in occupational aspirations of boys and girls as while narrowing down their occupational aspirations both orient to their own gender. These results are further substantiated in the light of Gottfredson's (1981) theory that elucidates the phenomena of

how people are enthralled towards certain occupations and what criteria they follow while focusing on the acceptable occupations and among them gender is a significant one. Moreover these findings indicate that due to changing roles of women they are passing through a transition, so a change is also observable in their attitudes but this change in attitude is quicker than their behavior. Therefore realization of the need is there to guide youth regarding their occupational choice to help them in making their career plan clearer, based on their real potentials, and perceive gender role attitudes.

### Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The study is not free from its limitations due to small sample size. Findings of present research cannot be generalized as sample included in present research comprises of students studying in two metropolitan cities of Pakistan and were enrolled in highly prestigious institutions of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Students studying in rural and private colleges, and who were in Senior Cambridge were not part of the sample. Although the findings of the study have limited applicability due to aforesaid factors, yet one can expect that the present analysis will add towards aggrandize our knowledge of the real labour market situation and rationing of jobs between genders in Pakistan. Furthermore, the relationship between occupational aspiration-expectation discrepancy, perceived gender roles, career decision-making self-efficacy, career maturity, and career indecision, may help in getting in depth understanding of the phenomena and may have important implications for career-development practice with adolescents (Lent et al., 2002; Schoon & Parsons, 2002; Super, 1990).

Future career counseling must be provided to adolescents at appropriate stage as the perseverance of aspirations and expectations by adolescence advocates the primal commencement of this work in earlier grades for both females and males. Career guidance programs needs to be comprehensive and should facilitate young people to probe all facets of educational and occupational opportunities available within a developmental and sociocultural milieu instead of just-in-time and improvised approaches often incorporated in our educational institutions. Moreover in future longitudinal research may prove propitious to fully explore the pathways of career development constructs and their relationships with occupational aspirations and expectations (Patton & Creed, 2007). In addition focusing on Gottfredson's theory that renders an excellent framework to analyze the evolving interests and understandings of young children about the working world in which they grow, with specific reference to Pakistani context may add not only new findings but also have implications for education and career guidance (Care, Deens, & Brown, 2007). Besides it is vital to incorporate changes in the system and steps to open the doors for more occupations to women, as this is the call for time. This will promote not only economic efficiency but would also reduce the gender gap in labor force participation and will bring gender equality in the country. Every effort should be made for the

advancement of female education through targeted programmes to help them realizing their real potentials. This would enhance their prospects of getting jobs in the formal sector and will help them to enter into higher paying occupations. Enhancing self-efficacy of women may raise not only their entry-level pay expectations but will also encourage cross-stereotypic job pursuits for both women and will curtail the gap in pay expectations (Mary & Lee, 2010). The role of education is the single most important factor for female labour to overcome gender bias as education and training play important part in making choice of an occupation for both men and women but its roles are stronger for women (Nasir, 2005). Keeping in view the seriousness and significance of the issue Rojewski (2005) called for further deliberation and additional work to refine the existing frameworks used to understand occupational aspirations and expectations.

## References

- Aisenbery, S & Bruckner, H. (2008). Occupational aspirations and gender gap in wages. *European sociological Review*, 24(5), 933-649.
- Anila (1992). Sex role attitudes of working and non-working women. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 7(1-2), 31-39.
- Anila, & Ansari, Z. A. (1992). *Development of sex role attitude scale for Pakistan*. Unpublished manuscript, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Anila, Khan, F. N., & Sabir, F. (1993). Men's sex role attitudes as related to their age, marital status, occupation, and education. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological research*, 8, 53-63.
- Anni, A., & Diane M. H. (2007). The effects of selective schooling and self-concept on adolescents' academic aspirations: An examination of Dweck's self-theory. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(3), 613-62.
- Ansari, Z. A. (1981). Occupational aspirations of high school students in Peshawar. *Pakistan Journal of Psychology*, 12, 3-9.
- Anyadike-Danes, M., & McVicar, D. (2010). My brilliant career: characterizing the early labor market trajectories of British women from generation x. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 38(3), 482-512.
- Aziz, S., & Kamal, A. (2009). Development and validation of Occupation Aspirations Scale for adolescents. *Frontier Women University, Journal of Social Sciences, Pakistan*, 2, 3-24.
- Bem, S. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological Review*, 88(4), 354-364.
- Betz, N. E., & Hackett, G. (1981). The relationship of career-related self-efficacy expectations to perceived career options in college women and men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28, 399-410.
- Briana, K. K., & Susan, W. C. (2008). The role of parental influences on young adolescents' career development. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 16(2), 198-217.
- Care, E., Deans, J., & Brown, R. (2007). The realism and sex type of four- to five-year-old children's occupational aspirations. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 5(2), 155-168.
- Clemans, K. H., DeRose, L. M., Graber, J. A., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2010). Gender in adolescence: Applying a person-in-context approach to gender identity and roles. In J. C. Chrisler & D. R. McCreary (Eds.), *Handbook of gender research in psychology* (pp. 527-558). NY: Springer.
- Cochran, S. V. (2010). Emergence and development of the psychology of men and masculinity. In J. C. Chrisler & D. R. McCreary (Eds.), *Handbook of gender research in psychology* (pp. 43-58). NY: Springer.
- Esther, C., Jan, D., & Robert, B. (2007). The realism and sex type of four-to five-year-old children's occupational aspirations. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 5(2), 155-168.
- Fassinger, R. E. (1990). Causal model of career choice in two samples of college women. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, 36, 225-248.
- Federal Bureau of Statistics (1998). *Compendium Gender Statistics*. Retrieved from [www.statpak.gov.pk/compendium\\_gender2004/compendium\\_gender2004.html](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/compendium_gender2004/compendium_gender2004.html).
- Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan. (2010). *Compendium on gender statistics in Pakistan 2009* (UNFPA Publication). Retrieved from <http://www.statpak.gov.pk>
- Fields, A., & Cochran, S. (2010). Men and Depression: Current Perspectives for Health Care Professionals. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* doi: 10.1177/1559827610378347
- Fortin, N. M. (2005). Gender Role Attitudes and the Labour-market Outcomes of Women across OECD Countries. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 21(3), 416-438. doi:10.1093/oxrep/gri024



## GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

- Fulcher, M., Sutfin, E. L. & Patterson, C. J. (2008). Individual Differences in Gender Development: Associations with Parental Sexual Orientation, Attitudes, and Division of Labor. *Sex Roles, 58*,330–341.
- Furdose, K. (2005). Occupational aspiration of medical girl students. Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
- Gianakos, I. (1995). The relation of sex-role identity to career decision-making self-efficacy. *Journal of Vocational behavior, 46*, 131-143.
- Gottfredson, L. S. (1981). Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology (Monograph), 28*(6), 545-579.
- Gottfredson, L. S. (1996). Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (3rd ed.) (pp. 179-228). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Halena, P. (1997). Gender self-efficacy expectations and occupational. *The Finnish Journal of Education, Kasvatus 28*(2), 166-179.
- Haque, R. (2010). *Gender and nexus of purdah culture in public policy* (MoWD Alumni Network–GTZ CB–MoWD Project). Retrieved from <http://mowdalumni.com.pk/pdf/driffat.pdf>
- Harper, B., & Haq, M (1997). Occupational Attainment of Men in Britain. *Oxford Economic Papers 49*, 638–649.
- Hassan, R. (1996). Achievement motivation and achievement attitudes. In Hassan, I. N. (Ed.), *Psychology of women*. Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University.
- Helwig, A. A. (1998). Occupational aspirations of a longitudinal sample from second to sixth grade. *Journal of Career Development, 24*, 247-265.
- Helwig, A. A. (2008). From childhood to adulthood: A 15-year longitudinal career development study. *Career Development Quarterly, 57*(1), 38-50.
- Jalal, Ayesha. (Ed.). (1991). The Convenience of Subservience: Women in the State of Pakistan. Kandiyoti, Deniz. *Women, Islam and the State*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Ju Chun, C. R. (2010). How family support and internet self-efficacy influence the effects of e-learning among higher aged adults--analyses of gender and age differences. *Computers and education, 5*(1), 255-264.
- Lauer, R. H., & Lauer, J. C. (1994). *Marriage and family: The quest for intimacy*. Madison: Brown & Benchmark.
- Lee, I. H. & Rojewski, J. W. (2009). Development of occupational aspiration prestige: A piecewise latent growth model of selected influences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 75*(1), 82-90.
- Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D., Talleyrand, R., McPartland, E.B., Davis, T., Chopra, S.B., Alexander, M.S., Suthakaran, V., & Chai, C.M. (2002). Career Choice Barriers, Supports, and Coping Strategies: College Students' Experience. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60*, 61-72.
- Mary, H., L. Z. D. C., & Lee, F. (2010). Gender differences in pay expectations: the role of job intentions and self-view. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 34*(2), 215-227.
- Mehta, C. M., & Strough, J. (2010). Gender segregation and gender-typing in adolescence. *Sex Roles, 63*(3-4), 251-263.
- Mei, T., Wei, P., Mark D, N. (2008). Factors influencing high students' career aspirations. *Professional School Counseling, 11*(5), 285-295.
- Meinster, M. O., & Rose, K. C. (2001). Longitudinal influences of educational aspirations and romantic relationships on adolescent women's vocational interests. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 58*, 313-327.
- Meng-Jung, T., & Chin-Chun, T. (2010). Junior High School Students Internet Usage and Self-Efficacy: A Reexamination of the Gender Gap. *Computers and Education, 54*(4), 1182-1192.
- Mensch B. S., Ibrahim, B. L., Lee, S. M., & El-Gibaly, O. (2003). Gender-role Attitudes among Egyptian Adolescents. *Studies In Family Planning, 34*(1) 8–18.
- Miller, L. & Budd, J. (1999). The Development of Occupational Sex-role Stereotypes, Occupational Preferences and Academic Subject Preferences in Children at Ages 8, 12 and 16. *Educational Psychology 19*(1), 17-35.
- Morinaga, Y., Frieze, I. H., & Ferligoj, A. (1993). Career plans and gender-role attitudes of college students in the United States, Japan, and Slovenia. *Sex Roles, 29* (5-6), 317-334.
- Moya, M., Expósito, F., & Ruiz, J. (2000). Close relationships, gender, and career salience. *Sex Roles, 42*(9-10). Retrieved from [www:http://Google.com](http://www.google.com).

## Saadia Aziz & Anila Kamal

- Nasir, Z. M. (2005). An Analysis of Occupational Choice in Pakistan: A Multinomial Approach. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 4(1), 57–79.
- Nazli, H. (2004). The Effects of Education, Experience and Occupation on Earnings: Evidence from Pakistan. *The Lahore Journal of Economics* 9, 1–30.
- Niles, F. S. (1994). Sex role attitudes among Northern Australians. *Australian Journal of Marriage and Family*, 15(1), 23-30.
- O' Brien, K. M. & Fassinger, R. E. (1993). A causal model of the career orientation and career choice of adolescent women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 40, 456-469.
- Patton, W. & Creed, P. (2007). The Relationship Between Career Variables and Occupational Aspirations and Expectations for Australian High School Adolescents. *Journal of Career Development*, 34, 127-148.
- Read, J. G. (2003). The Sources of Gender Role Attitudes among Christian and Muslim Arab-American Women. *Sociology of Religion*, 64(2):207-222.
- Riaz, M. N. (1995). Career choices and occupational images. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 10, 13-26.
- Rojewski, J. W. (2005). Occupational aspirations: Constructs, meanings, and application. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 131-154). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Salik, A. (2003). *Gender role attitudes and its relationship with performance on gender typed task in competitive conditions*. Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
- Sanders, R. E. (2004). Career and Family Priorities of College Students. *National Undergraduate Research Clearinghouse*, 7. Retrieved from <http://www.Webclearinghouse.net/volume/>
- Sandra, K. (1998). *Career development and gender, race, and class*. (ERIC Digest No. 199). Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education.
- Santrock, J. (1994). *Child development*. 6th ed. Madison: Brown & Benchmark.
- Sastre, M.T.M., & Mullot, E. (1992). Occupational preferences of Spanish Adolescents in relation to Gottfredson's theory. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 40, 306-317.
- Schoon, I. & Parsons, S. (2002). Teenage aspirations for future careers and occupational outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60, 262-88.
- Shaheed, F. Warraich, S.A. Balchin, C. & Gazdar, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Shaping Women's Lives* Lahore: Shirkat Gah.
- Siddiqui, R., & Hamid, S. (2003). Gender, Poverty, and Occupational Choice in Poor and Non-poor Households: An Analysis Based on the Household Survey Data of Pakistan. (MIMAP Report No. 17).
- Steinberg, L. (2005). *Adolescence*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). NY: McGraw-Hill companies, Inc.
- Super, D.E. (1990) A Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Career Development in Brown, D. Brooks, L. & Associates (2nd ed.) *Career Choice and Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 197-261.
- Tenenbaum, H. R., & Leaper, C. (2002). Are parents' gender schemas related to their children's' gender related cognitions? A meta analysis. *Developmental Psychology*, 38(4), 615–630.
- Teo, S. Y. (2003). Occupational Segregation and its Effect on Estimates of the Gender Wage Differential: Evidence from Brunei. *Asian Economic*, 17(4), 341-360.
- Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Valenzuela, A. (1993). Liberal gender role attitudes and academic achievement among Mexican-origin adolescents in two Houston inner-city catholic schools. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 15(3), 310-323.
- Williams, E. J., & Best, L.D. (1990). *Measuring sex stereotypes: A multi-nation study*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zveglich, J. E. Jr., & Rodgers, Y. M. (2004). Occupational segregation and the gender wage gap in a dynamic East Asian economy. *Southern Economic Journal*, 70(4), 850–875.

**Received: January 25, 2012**

**Revision Received: May 8, 2012**

